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LOUISIANA.

BY

HENRY GANNETT.



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1882.

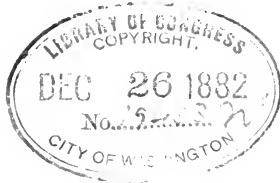
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LOUISIANA.

LOUISIANA, one of the Southern States of the American Union, situated on the lower course and debouchement of the Mississippi river. It is bounded S. by the Gulf of Mexico, W. by Texas, N. by Arkansas, and E. by Mississippi. Its western boundary is a line through the middle of Sabine lake and river, as far north as the 32d parallel, whence it follows the meridian of the point of intersection of the river with that parallel. The northern boundary is the parallel of 33°. The eastern boundary is the mid-channel of the Mississippi river, as far south as the 31st parallel, whence it follows that parallel eastward to the middle of Pearl river, and passes down that stream to the Gulf. The area of the State, according to a late determination made by the Census Bureau, is 48,720 square miles, of which 1060 consist of land-locked bays, 1700 of inland lakes, and 540 of river surface, leaving 45,420 square miles as the total land area of the State.

The average elevation of the State is only 75 feet, and no part of it reaches 500 feet above sea-level. The most elevated portion is near its northern border. The surface

is naturally divided into two parts—the upland, and the alluvial and coast swamp regions. Each of the larger streams, as well as a large proportion of the smaller ones, is accompanied by a belt of bottom land, of greater or less width, lying low as regards the stream, and liable to overflow at times of high water. These bottom lands form collectively what is known as the alluvial region. It extends in a broad belt down the Mississippi, from the mouth of the Ohio to the Gulf of Mexico, and up the Ouachita and its branches and the Red River, to and beyond the limits of the State. Its breadth along the Mississippi within this State ranges from 10 to 50 or 60 miles, and that along the Red River and Ouachita has an average breadth of 10 miles. Through its great flood-plain the Mississippi river winds upon the summit of a ridge formed by its own deposits. In each direction the country falls away in a succession of minor undulations, the summits of the ridges being occupied by the streams and bayous. Nearly all of this vast flood-plain lies below the level of high water in the Mississippi, and, were it not for the protection afforded by the levees, with which most of the course of the stream is lined, every considerable rise of the waters would inundate vast areas of fertile and cultivated land.

Stretching along the coast, and extending inland to a varying distance, ranging from 20 to 50 or even 60 miles, is a low, swampy region, the surface of which is diversified only by the slight ridges along the streams and bayous which traverse it, by occasional patches of slightly elevated

prairie, and by live oak ridges. It is in and along the borders of this coast swamp region that most of the sugarcane and rice produced in the State are grown.

The low regions of Louisiana, including the alluvial lands and the coast swamps, comprise about 20,100 square miles, or nearly one-half the area of the State. The remainder consists of uplands of prairie and forest. The borders of these uplands are generally defined by lines of bluffs of no great height.

The principal rivers are the Mississippi, which flows nearly 600 miles through and along the border of the State, the Red River, the Ouachita or Washita, Sabine, and Pearl, all which, excepting the last, are navigable at all stages of the water. Besides those streams which may properly be called rivers, the State is intersected by "bayous," several of which are of great importance both for navigation and for drainage. They may be characterized as secondary outlets of the rivers. Among them may be mentioned Achafalaya Bayou, Bayou la Fourche, and Bayou Rœuf. The signification of the name has, however, been extended, so that many rivers in this region, particularly if they have sluggish courses, are known as bayous. The alluvial portion of the State, particularly below the mouth of the Red River, is a perfect network of these bayous, which serve, in time of flood, to carry off the invading surplus waters.

The lakes of the State are mainly comprised in three classes. First come the lagoons of the coast, many of which are merely land-locked bays, whose waters are salt,

and which rise and fall with the tides. Of this class are Pontchartrain, Borgne, Maurepas, and Sabine, and indeed all or nearly all those situated in the region of the coast swamps. These are simply parts of the sea which have escaped the filling-in process carried on by the great river and the lesser streams. A second class, large in numbers but small in area, is the result of "cut-offs" and other changes of channel in the Mississippi, and, to a small extent, in the Red River. The part of the river left by this change of channel becomes gradually isolated from the stream by the deposit of silt along the borders of the latter, thus changing what were formerly windings of the river into crescent-shaped lakes. A third class may be mentioned, namely, those upon Red River and its branches which are caused by the partial stoppage of the water by the "raft" above Shreveport. These are, of course, much larger at flood season than at other times, and, it may be added, have been much reduced in size by the cutting of a channel through the raft.

The climate of the State is semi-tropical; the mean annual temperature ranges from 60° to 75°, changing approximately with the latitude. The mean temperature of the hottest month is about 85°, while that of the coldest month ranges in different parts of the State from 45° to 60°. The temperature rarely, if ever, falls below 0° Fahr., while the heats of summer reach 105° in some parts. The rainfall is very heavy along the coast, exceeding 60 inches annually, but decreases inland, and is not more than 50 inches in the northern districts.

This large amount of moisture, together with the high temperature and the fertile soil, suffices to cover the greater part of the State, and particularly the alluvial regions and the coast swamps, with the most luxuriant sub-tropical vegetation, both arborescent and herbaceous. Much of the latter region is covered with lofty cypress trees, from which hang festoons of Spanish moss. The most common species of the alluvial regions and the drier portions of the coast swamps are live and other species of oaks, sweet gum, magnolia, the tulip tree, black walnut, pine, and cedar. Along the streams in the alluvial region are found willows, cotton-woods, basket oaks, and other species of similar habitat. For the beauty and fragrance of its flowers Louisiana is justly celebrated. Its bottom lands and its upland prairies are decked with them in tropical profusion. Prominent among them in abundance are roses, magnolias, jasmines, camellias, and oleanders. Most fruits common to a semi-tropical region are to be found here, either native or cultivated, such as oranges, olives, figs, peaches, and plums.

The forests cover a very considerable portion of the area of the State, and are destined in the future to form an important element of its wealth, although up to the present time the lumber interest has not been very extensively developed. The most valuable timber is that of the long-leaved pine (*Pinus australis*) and the short-leaved pine (*Pinus mitis*). These are mainly confined to the upland regions, being nowhere found in the alluvial or coast sections. The north-western part of the State is occupied

by the short-leaved pine, while the long-leaved pine is found mainly in large masses north and south of the Red River, and also in the east of the State.¹

The native fauna of the State resembles in its general features that of the other Gulf States. Large quadrupeds are comparatively rarely met with, although occasionally there are seen black bears and wolves, and in the swamps an occasional panther. Smaller quadrupeds, such as raccoons, squirrels, wild cats, opossums, &c., are still common. Every bayou contains alligators; and reptiles of various species, such as turtles, lizards, horned toads, rattlesnakes, and moccasin snakes, are abundant. The avifauna of the State is varied and abundant, comprising eagles, vultures, hawks, owls, pelicans, cranes, turkeys, geese, partridges, ducks, &c., besides numberless smaller species, many of these, as in other parts of the world in the same latitude, being brilliant of plumage, but harsh of voice.

The surface geology in its general outlines is very simple. The whole alluvial region and the coast swamps, besides a considerable portion of the prairie and pine flats bordering upon the lowlands, are of the most recent or Quarternary

¹ Of these two species of trees, Professor Sargent, of the United States Census Bureau, estimates that there were standing on June 1, 1880, 26,558,000,000 feet of the long-leaved and 21,625,000,000 feet of the short-leaved species. The cut of the former for the census year was 61,882,000, and of the latter 22,709,000 feet, the total cut being but .2 per cent. of the amount standing. There is every probability, however, that the rate of destruction will increase greatly in the future.

formations, while the remainder of the State, comprised mainly in the region west of the Ouachita and Calcasieu rivers, is Tertiary, with the exception of a few very small islands of the Cretaceous formation in the north-western part of the State.

In the Tertiary region are found small quantities of iron ore, and an indifferent brown coal. But the only important mineral product of the State is rock salt; the deposit upon Petite Anse Island, in the coast swamp region, has been extensively worked, and produces a very high quality of salt. In 1880 its production was 312,000 bushels.

The principal industry of the State is agriculture, and in that cotton takes the first place. Out of a total area of tilled land of two and a half million acres, more than one-third was planted in 1879 with cotton. The total production was 508,569 bales, an average of .59 of a bale per acre. Louisiana stood seventh in the list of cotton-producing States, being exceeded by Mississippi, Georgia, Texas, Alabama, Arkansas, and South Carolina. The cotton crop is cultivated both in the alluvial and the upland regions. In the former there were raised in 1879 282,390 bales, on 364,790 acres, an average yield per acre of .77 of a bale. In the latter region 498,080 acres were planted, giving a total yield of 225,385 bales, an average of .45 of a bale per acre. The great depth and fertility of the alluvial soils are strikingly illustrated by these average yields. In the coast swamp region but little cotton is cultivated,—the total yield in these parishes, as reported by the census, being but 794 bales.

The production of other agricultural products, as given by the census of 1880, is as follows:—

Indian corn	Bush.	9,906,189
Oats	„	229,840
Wheat	„	7,034
Rye.....	„	1,013
Sugar cane .. { Sugar.....	Hhds.	171,706
{ Molasses	Gals.	11,696,248
Sweet potatoes	Bush.	1,318,110
Rice	lb	23,189,038
Tobacco.....	„	55,954

Rice is cultivated almost entirely in the lower coast region, on the margin of the swamps, upon their prairie islands, and in the alluvial region south of Red River.

With the exception of its navigable streams, the State is not well supplied with the means of transportation. The only railroads of importance are—the Chicago, St Louis, and New Orleans, which connects New Orleans with Cairo, Illinois; the Louisiana and Texas Railroad (Morgans), which runs from New Orleans westward to Vermillionville, and thence northward to Cheuerville; the Louisiana Western Railroad, from Vermillionville to Orange in Texas; the New Orleans and Pacific Railroad, from New Orleans to Shreveport; and the Vicksburg, Shreveport and Pacific Railroad, running from Delta to Monroe. Besides these there are several minor lines. The total length of railroad is 632½ miles, and the cost of construction \$44,869,342. The gross returns for 1880 were \$3,238,318, and the net returns \$984,497.

Louisiana, like the other Southern States, has latterly made great advances in the manufacture of home products. In 1880 there were 120 looms and 6096 spindles, which used 1354 bales of raw cotton.

The banking interest is not extensive, as will be seen from the following statement, from the report of the comptroller of the currency in 1880 :—

	Number.	Capital.
National banks	7	\$2,875,000
State banks	3	2,723,698.
Private bankers	8	53,333
Total.....	18	5,652,031

The number and circulation of newspapers and periodicals for 1880 are as follows :—

	Number.	Circulation.
Dailies	13	38,765
Weeklies, semi-weeklies, &c.	97	95,115
Monthlies	2	950

According to the census of 1880, the population of the State was 939,946. This was divided nearly equally between the sexes, females being but slightly in excess. The proportion of the population which was of foreign birth was very small, being but 5·5 per cent., while in respect of race, the negro element outnumbered the whites, being 51·5 per cent. of the total population. The following table gives the number in each of the above classes :—

Male	468,754	White	454,954
Female	471,192	Coloured	483,655
Native	885,800	Chinese	489
Foreign	54,146	Indian	848

The following table exhibits the growth of the State

in population since it became a portion of the United States :—

	Population.	Per Cent. of Increase.	Density of Population.		Population.	Per Cent. of Increase.	Density of Population.
1810	76,556	...	1·7	1850	517,762	46·9	11·4
1820	152,923	99·7	3·4	1860	708,002	36·7	15·6
1830	215,739	41·0	4·7	1870	726,915	2·6	16·0
1840	352,411	63·3	7·8	1880	939,946	29·3	20·6

The principal cities are New Orleans, with a population of 216,090; Shreveport, in the north-western corner, population 8009; and Baton Rouge, the State capital, 7197.¹

The State is fairly well provided with the means of education. School attendance, however, is not very general. Out of a population of 330,930 between the ages of six and sixteen, 78,528 were enrolled in public schools, and the estimated average attendance was 50,248, or less than one-sixth. There are in the State seven colleges, with 49 instructors and 786 students.

As in the other States of the Union, the government is distributed among the executive, legislative, and judicial departments. The executive is represented by the governor, lieutenant-governor, secretary of state, State treasurer, auditor of public accounts, attorney-general, and superintendent of instruction—all these offices being elective, and the period of incumbency four years. The legislative power is vested in a general assembly consisting of two

¹ The capital was removed from New Orleans to Baton Rouge in 1880.

branches, the lower one being the house of representatives and the upper one the senate. The members of the former body are elected every two years, and the number is by law never to exceed 120 nor be less than 90. The members of the senate are elected for four years. The number of senators is fixed at 36, and the senatorial districts are apportioned according to the population. The judicial power is vested in a supreme court, district and parish courts, and justices of the peace. The supreme court, except in cases specially provided for by law, has appellate jurisdiction only. It is composed of one chief justice and four associate justices. These are appointed by the governor, by and with the advice and consent of the senate, and hold office for a term of eight years. The State is divided by the legislature into judicial districts, in each of which there is a district court. The number of districts in the State cannot by law be less than twelve nor more than twenty. The district judges are elected by the voters of the district, and hold office for four years. Each parish has its own court. The parish judge is elected by the voters of the parish, and holds his office for two years. In addition to this each parish elects a certain number of justices of the peace with power to try minor cases. The State is divided into fifty-eight parishes (equivalent to counties), and each of these into a certain number of police jury wards which are designated by their numbers.

Louisiana is represented in the National Congress by two senators who are chosen by the legislature of the State for a term of six years, and by six representatives who are

chosen for a term of two years by the voters of the several representative districts.

The following table, compiled from the returns of wealth, debt, and taxation of the tenth United States census, shows the financial condition of the State in 1880.

<i>Valuation (Assessed)—</i>	
Real estate	\$122,362,297
Personal property	37,800,142
<i>Debt—</i>	
State	23,437,640
Parish	1,107,951
Municipal	18,320,361
<i>Taxation—</i>	
State	1,171,084
Parish	710,573
Municipal.....	1,914,219

History.—The early history of the exploration of Louisiana forms one of the most interesting chapters in the annals of the country. It was first visited in 1541 by De Soto, of the Spanish Government service. This daring explorer, landing on the coast of Florida, made his way through the pathless forests and almost impassable swamps to the Mississippi, and even penetrated many leagues west of it, finally leaving his bones upon its shores. In 1673 Marquette and Joliet, starting from the settlements in Canada, descended the great river from northern Illinois to the mouth of the Arkansas. In 1682 La Salle descended the Mississippi, also starting from the French settlements in the Canadas. He navigated the river from the mouth of the Illinois to the Gulf. Returning to France, he originated a scheme for colonizing the country, and succeeded in obtaining from France the desired concessions, and in collecting a company of colonists, which set sail from Rochelle on the 24th of July 1684. Owing to the

difficulty of obtaining correct longitudes at sea, the vessel missed the mouth of the Mississippi, and finally landed on the shore of Matagorda Bay, in Texas, where they established a colony. From this point La Salle started to make his way overland to Canada, but was treacherously murdered by his companions. Shortly after his death the colony disappeared.

The first successful attempt at settlement within the State was made by the French under the leadership of Iberville in 1700. The colony was located at a point on the Mississippi about 38 miles below the present site of New Orleans, now known as "Poverty Point." At first it was by no means prosperous, and it was only after the treaty of Utrecht that it appears to have gained ground. At that time there were not over five hundred Europeans in the whole territory of Louisiana as then constituted; the greater part were in what is now the State of Louisiana, the others being scattered at a few little posts along the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. Immediately after the treaty of Utrecht the king of France granted the whole territory of Louisiana to Antoine Crozat, ceding to him all the territories watered by the Mississippi and its tributaries below the mouth of the Illinois, with all the privileges of hunting, fishing, commerce, mining, &c., which might arise in this new territory. Crozat appointed Cadillac governor of the colony. Affairs, however, went badly under the new administration, and after a succession of governors the whole district fell into the hands of John Law, the originator of the famous "Mississippi scheme."

Desiring to control, among other commercial monopolies, the colony of Louisiana, Law found it an easy matter to obtain the charter and privileges from Crozat, who was only too glad to relinquish them in his favour. A company was formed under the name of the "Western Company." Grants made to it were for twenty-five years. Subscribers to the stock were allowed to pay three-fourths of the purchase money in the depreciated bonds of France, one-fourth only of the subscription being asked for in coin. Bienville, brother of Iberville, and a man possessing great influence in the colony, was appointed governor. One of his first acts was to found the city of New Orleans on its present site. During the year 1718 7 vessels were sent out with stores and emigrants, numbering in all about 1500 persons. The following year 11 ships were despatched, and 500 negroes from the Guinea coast were imported. In 1721 1000 white emigrants arrived, and 1367 slaves.

In the meantime the Western Company had obtained from the regent power to join with it the East India Company grants, and its name was changed to that of the India Company. This inflated scheme burst in due time, but the misfortunes of the company did not check the prosperity of the colony. The year 1721, which was that following the financial ruin of the former, witnessed the greatest immigration to the colony which it had ever received. The company retained its organization and its grant of Louisiana until 1732, when the province reverted to the crown. At that time the population of the colony

was said to have been 5000 whites and 2000 slaves ; but a census taken fifteen years later shows a population of only 4000 whites.

In 1762, by a secret treaty, the province was transferred from France to Spain. This treaty was not made public till a year and a half after it was signed, and Spain did not obtain possession until 1769. Meanwhile, in February 1763, by a treaty made between France and Spain on the one hand and Great Britain and Portugal on the other, the portion of Louisiana lying east of the Mississippi from its source to the river Iberville, and thence along the middle of the Iberville and the lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain to the sea, was ceded to Great Britain. In this treaty, by implication, Louisiana was made to extend to the sources of the Mississippi, and this is the view commonly held. The province was governed by Spain till the year 1800, in the meantime making little or no progress owing to the narrow and oppressive policy pursued towards it by the home government. By the treaty of 1783 with Great Britain, the United States were placed in possession of the eastern bank of the Mississippi river, as far down as the 31st degree of latitude, while Spain held possession of the other bank, and had complete possession of the river below the 31st parallel.

From the time of the first settlement in the valley of the Mississippi and its tributaries, the importance of the river as a means of transportation to the seaboard, and the almost absolute necessity of possessing the country about its mouths, were recognized by the United States. As

settlements increased in the valley and spread down the river, and as the hostile policy of Spain became more and more plainly developed, the feeling of the settlers became stronger against the restrictions of the Spanish Government. In 1800, however, Spain ceded the territory back to France, and in 1803 it was sold to the United States by Napoleon, in order to prevent it from falling into the hands of Great Britain. The price was 60,000,000 francs, with a stipulation that the United States should assume the claims of its citizens against France (French spoliation claims), which were estimated to amount to \$3,750,000. The province which thus came into the possession of the United States was of vast though ill-defined territorial extent.

In 1804 nearly all of what is now the State of Louisiana was erected into a territory, under the name of Orleans. In 1810 this was increased by the addition of the southeastern portion, east of the Mississippi river, and in 1812 it was admitted as a State under its present name, and with its present boundaries. During the war with Great Britain, which followed shortly after, a battle was fought for the possession of New Orleans, between the British forces under Pakenham and the American army under Jackson, in which the former were signally defeated. Up to 1860 the development of the State was very rapid, especially in the direction of agriculture and commerce.

Upon the outbreak of the civil war the State promptly joined its fortunes with the Southern Confederacy. Its act of secession from the Union was passed December 23,

1860, and from that time until the final suppression of the rebellion the State government was in the hands of the Confederates, although for the last two years of the war its territory was held in the main by the Federal forces. In the early part of the war the State suffered but little, but in April 1862 Admiral Farragut with a powerful fleet succeeded in passing Forts Jackson and St Philip, which defended the approaches to New Orleans, and captured the city, thus compelling the evacuation of the forts. The navigation of the Mississippi being secured by this means and by operations from the north, the State was at the mercy of the Federal Government. At the close of the war, on the reorganization of the State government, the administration fell into the hands of the ignorant negro classes led by unscrupulous whites, and an unfortunate state of affairs ensued, which was brought to an end only by the arbitrary and forcible assumption of power by the better elements of society. This occurred in 1877, and since that time the State has prospered markedly in all material respects.

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